

and put out, and determined more than ever to make his unwilling workmen do his bidding. When the old priest saw that his warnings were neglected he stood up on one bank and started to curse, as promised. Hour by hour went by, the sun grew hotter and hotter as the blazing May day went on. The engineer worked and fumed harder than ever, and at last towards afternoon, probably as a result of the heat and excitement, fell down in a fit on the unfinished bridge and died, so that the priest won the day. The bridge, although of great importance, being on a great military road between Patna and the north-west was never completed, and when you cross the stream, as I have done hundreds of times, you drive through the river-bed in the dry weather, and in the rains you go in a boat. The unfinished piers of the bridge stand there still, gradually crumbling away.

The tale has a sequel—the natives believe that the spirit of the (shall we call him) murdered engineer wanders nightly near his grave, and that he cries out at intervals, so that they will not at night occupy a row of huts near by. One night I was called out of bed by a terrified looking native, who begged me to go at once to see a young civilian (just out from England) who was stationed in the bungalow, and who was dying. I hurried down and found the young man just recovering and very hysterical. He knew the story of the place, and I believe had become hysterical from fright or nervousness at some sound heard. But the natives for all time to come will tell how the spirit of the cursed engineer seized upon the young sahib in the middle of the night. They probably also give me credit of having very quickly exorcised him by saying a few *charms* to the patient.

The Mussulmans of Herat believe that the spirit of cholera stalks through the land in advance of the actual disease. Here we have evidence, that their keen observation had grasped the fact that a something, call it a spirit or call it a microbe, preceded the actual invasion by the disease. They had, indeed, discovered that there was an incubation period in cholera.

When cholera is raging in a village a dreadful hubbub is kept up by the inhabitants. This is to scare away the goddess of the disease from the village. But in the surrounding villages the people are equally alive to their danger, and by lighting fires (which was also done, by the way, in London, in 1665), and if possible, making more noise than their neighbors, they try to dissuade the spirit from coming near them. Naturally if the villagers of one hamlet are doing their best to frighten the spirit of the disease from out of their domain, and the inhabitants of the next village are doing their best to prevent the same from crossing the boundary, ill-feeling is apt to arise between the villages, and such has often been the cause of serious feuds between the parties concerned.